

# **Smith Cove Interim Improvements**

Public Meeting February 10, 2004

- Sign-in began at 7 p.m., and the meeting itself began at 7:10 p.m. Approximately 40 community members were in attendance.
- Parks staff were introduced: Rich Hennings, Major Maintenance Manager; Don Harris, Property and Acquisition Services Manager; Ted Holden, Senior landscape Architect, Virginia Hassinger, Project Manager
- John Leonard (Department of Neighborhoods) announced plans for Magnolia clean up on Feb. 28, including clean up of upper park site.

## **Project Background and Description**

- The property acquisition included two separate sites – Upper and Lower Smith Cove. The sites are separated by property retained by the U.S. Navy (which includes the Admiral's residence and associated security buffer). Parks had funding to acquire the property, but except as noted below, no development funding was available.
- Ten years ago federal government tagged the property as surplus. For the past five to six years, Parks has been negotiating with the Navy to purchase the property. The total cost of acquisition was about \$6 million. Funding included \$1 million from the West Point treatment placement mitigation money, also known as the Shoreline Improvement Fund (SPIF); \$2 million came from the 2000 ProParks Levy; and King County provided \$3 million. County Councilmember Larry Phillips negotiated for Parks to spend \$2.7 million toward acquisition and an additional \$300,000 for youth sports field development.
- The Upper Site is on top of the bluff and is south west of the Magnolia Bridge. Parks plan for this site is passive use. The City will open the site to the public in the near future, and has committed to completing that task by the end of March 2004. One small delay is possible in that the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) needs to relocate a utility pole and communication equipment before Parks provide can public access. The FAA has had budget and contract problems in accomplishing this. If they cannot complete their work soon, the City will look for a "work around" solution, such as having them provide an additional security fence around their items.
- The Lower Site is at the base of the bluff, between Magnolia Bridge and Elliot Bay:
  1. Parks is enthusiastic about getting users in the park. Parks does not have funds at this time for full planning and development, but will proceed with interim development with the funding provided by King County.
  2. Other developments in the future by the Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT) or the Port of Seattle could impact future plans for this site. The Port of Seattle is considering developing the Pier 91 corridor. If this happens, it may be that the lower property or a portion of it could be traded for portions of Port holdings. Also, the Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT) will replace

Magnolia Bridge in coming years. There are three possible configurations for the bridge. One of the options would affect the new park. The impact of these potential developments is not fully known at this time. However, it should be noted that Parks expects it to be several years before this all plays out. For more information about the Magnolia Bridge project, visit: [www.seattle.gov/transportation/magbridgereplace](http://www.seattle.gov/transportation/magbridgereplace), or contact SDOT Project Manager Kirk Jones, [kirk.jones@seattle.gov](mailto:kirk.jones@seattle.gov) or (206) 615-0862.

**Interim Design:**

1. The basic concept for the site development is “clean, flat, green.” The site is a mix of asphalt and concrete pavement, areas of compacted gravel, grass, street lights, a small electrical substation, and a variety of abandoned utility vaults and manholes. Parks’ plan is to clear and grade the site for an open-use sports meadow. We will remove the concrete and asphalt, abandon remaining utilities and level the site. We will bring in up to 9 inches of good turf planting soil and seed about 3 acres. The turf needs 9-12 months to establish before Parks can open the site. It is anticipated that the park will be open for public use in May or June or 2005. At this point, there are no funds for further development. When Parks does have funding for development, we will engage in a full planning process that will consider a variety of options for the site.
2. Park visitors may notice site activity happening in the near future. Parks is building a security fence along the west side of the property. Later, Parks will relocate utilities and an electrical substation associated with the Admiral’s house. These relocation costs are not part of the \$300,000 development budget from King County.

**Question & Answer and comments:**

- **Q:** Can there be a walking path around field?
  - *A: – There is no designated path; the area will be open field.*
- **Q:** Bridge alignments: is there an easement?
  - *A: - Yes – SDOT has an easement under bridge.*
- **Q:** Have you tested soils? What are the shoreline restrictions?
  - *A: - Testing for contaminants was done; the site is clean for park use, although soil is not great for planting. To develop in shoreline we need a shoreline use permit. Generally these are issued, or most readily issued for shoreline related use.*
- **Q:** Vehicle access – parking: Where, how much?
  - *A: – Vehicle access is planned off of 23<sup>rd</sup> Avenue. A fence will remain around the site, except for access point(s). There is on-street parking.*
- **Q:** What are the dimensions of interim development site?

- *A: - The dimensions of the planned “clean, green, flat” area are 195 feet x 465 feet.*
- **Q:** Will the site be scheduled?
  - *A: – The Parks sports staff are the best folks to answer that question, and they are not in attendance. They will work with community and sports groups. There may be some scheduled use; although, we do not intend to create a scheduled play area for competitive games.*
- **Q:** Will there be field lighting and markings?
  - *A: – No field designation or lighting will be part of interim development.*
- **Comment:** This park site, no matter how it is developed, is important to the Uptown area. We need both more sports field and more waterfront access.
- **Q:** If SDOT chooses Alternate A for re-development of the Magnolia Bridge, what will the impact be to the potential trade/deal with the Port?
  - *A: – We do not know at this time.*
- **Q:** Shoreline 1/3: why not use for off-leash?
  - *A –We expect such use would require a shoreline permit.*
- **Q:** An alternate site layout was presented by Magnolia Soccer Club. Will Parks consider site use for younger kid’s soccer? If Parks just graded existing grass area, could the project be completed in a couple of months, and site used this fall (save money and time)?
  - *A: - We can consider alternate layouts, and will review your plan. We would like to open the field as soon as possible too; however, in order for the turf to support the anticipated usage, we could not open the park as early as this fall. Even if we could seed the field today, design and contracting procedures will take several months to complete.*
- **Comment:** The site map does not show visionary possibilities. We should open the shoreline to connect to other parks.
- **Comment:** Parks should consider and encourage parking to the north.
- **Comment:** Without parking, this scheme does not make sense. The Magnolia Soccer proposal has parking.
- **Comment:** Please be sure to not cause a negative effect on the marina/Palisades.
- **Comment:** I was surprised to learn of the suggested ballfield use. My desire is to convert it to shoreline use.
- **Comment:** I have a concern that making this into a sports field will lead to lights and more active use. My desire is for more passive shoreline use.

- **Comment:** I believe there is a need for a sports field and the possibility of creating an associated parking area without impacting shoreline area.
- **Comment:** Given the interim use and County funding stipulations, sports use seems like the only option.
- **Comment:** There has been no planning; there is no master plan. I am concerned about not having a full public process. Parks should plan for the entire park now. I want a commitment on how this park will be developed ultimately, and when full planning will be done. I am concerned about a very specific field plan.
- **Comment:** I want clarification of the commitment from King County and an interpretation of “ballfields for kids.
- **Comment:** I like the practicable, straightforward plan presented by Parks.
- **Comment:** I am an off-leash advocate.
- **Comment:** We have shoreline access needs. I want to see shoreline uses such as habitat restoration and passive enjoyment activities like picnicking. The Port already has a commitment to ballfields.
- **Comment:** Can you please clarify the City Ordinance that talks about “unlit ballfield for children.” Initially I was concerned about determination for ballfield use, but happy at how Parks interpreted it. This plan leaves open other possibilities.
- **Comment:** If this field is solely dedicated for ballfields, dogs are excluded by ordinance. People want to bring dogs.
- **Comment:** I support an off-leash area for people who own dogs.
- **Comment:** Site security is a concern to Elliot Bay Marina. Also, maintenance of the access road is by the Marina. I have concerns about access control, especially during July 4.
- **Comment:** Regarding concerns about an interim plan getting locked in: Denny Field is an example of interim use (by school, soccer club) that worked and is not locked in.
- **Comment:** I would like to applaud Councilmember Phillips for setting aside a field for kids.
- **Comment:** I would like to remind everyone of the volunteer work force: Troop 80. These young men are ready to help on Feb. 28 and beyond. Help us find ways to make it easy for them to accomplish projects.
  - *A: – Contact Kerry Lasko, sector manager or volunteer coordinator.*

- **Q:** How much land is left under the bridge? Is there any way to leave an area open for off-leash?
  - *A- Parks (Don Harris) will get back to speaker on this.*
- **Comment:** This is an interim plan that makes sense for kids.
- **Q:** Is there a pedestrian link between the upper and lower properties?
  - *A: No, at this point that is geographically impossible to provide. There may be a possibility for one when the new Magnolia Bridge is built.*
- **Q:** At some point, will there be a planning process?
  - *A – Yes before any long-term development. At this time we have no funds for long term development. Until funded, we are not making long-term plans.*
- **Comment:** As a dog owner, I feel locked out of Discovery Park. Ballard and Green Lake are too far away for me. I want a local off-leash area. There is a huge demand for this.
- **Comment:** Can we walk our dogs on a leash on the flat, clean, green area? Please don't prohibit this.

<http://www.seattle.gov/transportation/magbridgereplace.htm>